

## **Economic Development Advisory Council**

### **9.24.14 Meeting minutes**

#### **Americana Room – Hampshire Hills**

*Minutes approved on December 10, 2014*

#### **Present:**

Matt Ciardelli, Ciardelli Fuel Co  
Chris Costantino, Milford Conservation Commission  
Lyle Fulkerson, HPM Insurance  
John Siergiewicz, Hollis Line Machine  
Chad Brannon, Fieldstone Land Consultants  
Heather Leach, First Colebrook Bank  
John McCormack, TIFD  
Don Jalbert, Milford HS Applied Technology Center  
Penny Seaver, Bean Seaver & Smith  
Dale White, Leighton A White, Inc.

#### **Excused:**

Michael Brisebois, Hitchiner Mfg Co  
Mark Fougere, Board of Selectmen  
Wendy Hunt, Milford Improvement Team  
Janet Langdell, Planning Board  
Sean Trombly, Trombly Gardens

Bill Parker, Director Community Development  
Shirley Wilson, Recording secretary

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M. Ciardelli called the meeting to order at 7:30AM.

#### **Minutes:**

H. Leach made a motion to accept the minutes from 6/25/14 as submitted. P. Seaver seconded and all in favor.

#### **Update on the UNH Business Retention and Expansion Program:**

B. Parker said the purpose is to take a survey, prepared by the UNH Cooperative Extension, out to the businesses in Amherst and Milford. The goal is to provide outreach to the business community; to see what their needs are, if there are any local problems, if they're planning to relocate or expand and to find out how we can help. There are a couple levels of organization to the group with a steering committee, a task force and recruited volunteers to go out in teams of two. Next week there will be a one hour training session to go over the survey and get it ready to go out. L. Fulkerson said this is a joint effort between Amherst and Milford and the in depth questionnaire will try to identify a whole slew of different businesses within the two communities. We will do a mailing to approximately 800 businesses, hopefully resulting in at least 80 interviews. The questionnaire will consist of generic questions that will drill down into why businesses like the community, what they see is lacking, what is needed and how to attract more resources into the community for them. UNH will compile the data and come up with a proposal to outline suggested goals for us to target and implement over the next few years. It's really pretty exciting and it will be good for EDAC to get involved in this process and champion the cause. B. Parker then asked for volunteers. M. Ciardelli added that the time commitment will be minimal. L. Fulkerson said we are compiling a list of potential businesses to target and referenced the drop box account that was set up.

#### **Proposed West Elm Waterline Expansion/ TIF District expansion**

D. White gave a brief update of the project and said the Commissioners feel it is needed because of the limited quantity and quality of water in the West Elm St area. We've met with the Selectmen and are preparing to go to the town meeting with a warrant article to request money for the engineering. We will contribute \$140,000 out of the users account to upgrade a section of the existing 8" line to a 12" line, also as part of this project. The State is preparing to upgrade that section of Rte 101 in 2016 and if we don't get this in now, there will be a five year moratorium prohibiting all excavation. Also, there is the possibility of a future intermunicipal connection with Wilton. The key will be to have it ready so that any future connection fees will help offset the cost. The Commissioners have gone round and round but we are all in agreement. We've talked about expanding the TIF District, but we feel the fairest and most equitable way to fund this project will be with a twenty year bond so that the whole town can participate. It will become town infrastructure and will also expand fire protection. It has been done many times in the past and the town has always support it. Some businesses out there may also want to participate. P. Seaver inquired about the dollar amounts. D. White explained in that the estimate is for \$800,000 but that includes the Water Utilities portion, which would be taken away from the total. Also, the amount is for

the complete project which includes final paving. We would only have to do the base coat due to the anticipated State work and save some money.

P. Seaver agreed and said from a town perspective, that is a gateway and at some point there will be more development opportunity with infrastructure. D. White said there are expandable pieces of land and there is so much potential; they already have sewer and drainage in that area, but no water. There are tax payers out there and now we need to step up. The Town will benefit and that's economic development. C. Brannon said they were a low user so there was not much impact when Fieldstone was located in the West Elm St area, but the parcels are so small it is hard to locate a well. He was actually surprised to learn there was private water in that area. Discussion pertaining to the Dunkin Donuts site followed. D. White said we will be meeting with all the land owners within the next few weeks. By Ordinance, they don't have to hook up but we will put the tie-ins for each property. The fee will depend on the usage, but it will be around \$1500. The property values will increase for the businesses, the value will increase for the Town and for the water users. H. Leach agreed that water will increase the value of properties instantly and you will see nicer development over time because you do have good traffic and good visibility. D. White said we do need the support of EDAC, the Selectmen, the Planning Board, the Budget Advisory Committee and the users in that area. Although the Town has a huge wish list of capital expenditures, what is more important than water? L. Fulkerson asked if the Commissioners had explored any federal or state funding and referenced recent funding for a community water system in Fitzwilliam. He'll send Dale the information. B. Parker said Mike Putnam mentioned the water extension as a priority at the last BOS meeting. H. Leach asked if there were plans for the proposed state roadwork yet. B. Parker said there are preliminary plans and they do not include a sidewalk. D. White said the design is mainly for traffic flow safety.

B. Parker said the expansion of the TIF District would allow a portion of the property taxes generated from new development to help offset the cost of that bond. It is another funding mechanism and development incentive. It will also go to warrant for the March vote.

#### **Status of Finalization of Community Economic Development Survey**

H. Leach said they are moving forward, will give more information at the next meeting.

#### **Community Development updates:**

C. Costantino said the library is moving forward with the expansion. The biggest change is to not expand eastward but to bring the building down to the street level to make that side look more like the Town Hall side. We will use the front lawn space and there will be better access from the main street and the sidewalk. She reviewed the postal flyer and conceptual design as well as the different building stages. Currently the library spends \$30,000 every year just to maintain the building from an ongoing series of expenses and the new building will be sufficient for fifty years. The library has become a communication and information center; it is not just books anymore. B. Parker added that the library is a huge economic driver for the downtown area. C. Costantino added that the library is being used until 8:30 every night of the week and is a huge resource for the town. This design will not resolve the traffic along Nashua St but the two houses in back will be removed to offer about thirty more parking spaces in the rear. A brief discussion on future access followed. L. Fulkerson inquired if there had been any consideration for a café inside to provide for functions and generate additional revenue for the library. C. Costantino replied that there is a space allocated on the lower level and we will let the need evolve. It has been fairly successful in other libraries.

B. Parker said there is not a lot of new commercial development being proposed but there has been preliminary discussion in the office with CVS. There are also two residential proposals in discussion currently; a 54 lot subdivision tying Mile Slip and Boynton Hill Roads together, and a 34 lot subdivision off West St which is along the lines of what the Planning Board is leaning towards right now for more affordable housing. We've also had some interest in signage for the Stop N' Shop building.

L. Fulkerson noted that John Samonas, the land owner where Cumberland Farms went in, shared that he is very positive about in Milford in trying to get that project going. He was very complimentary of the Community Development office and the ease of doing business in Milford relative to so many other communities. L. Fulkerson also commented on how nice that whole entryway area looks now and discussion ensued.

**Other Business:**

D. White inquired about the direction of the group. This committee has been instrumental over the past few years in promoting business and bringing awareness to existing Town boards and the public but we need something structural to work on. B. Parker said the website, which has long been a goal and source of discussion, will resurface. I am enrolled in an eight session UNH Economic Development Academy course and my project is to put together the foundation for the website, so I will be bringing that back to the subcommittee. L. Fulkerson brought up the retention exercise and said EDAC can take a leadership role in executing and implementing the objectives that come out of the UNH study. P. Seaver said this group can also do some recruitment in the lull over the next couple of months so that we can be ready to take on those projects. M. Ciardelli added that maybe some of the people we interview may be willing to participate on the EDAC council and although it may be challenging to keep on charge and move forward, the outcome of the business retention project may be our next step. H. Leach brought up the EDAC survey and reminded everyone that the original purpose was to create an economic development policy or statement for the town but said at this point in time, it might be best to wait until a new Town Administrator is chosen. B. Parker said that is a good point and we should also convey to the Selectmen the importance of getting a town manager or administrator with a focus on economic development. We've tried to stress top down management and need a good driver. H. Leach suggested some type correspondence from this group to encourage that.

L. Fulkerson asked if we can get a copy of the business retention questionnaire to the EDAC committee that way we can see of some of the data points and get feedback.

D. Jalbert said two of the things discussed last night at the Regional Center Advisory Committee were the need to re-invigorate our program advisory committees. Each one of our occupational training programs has an advisory committee to assess curriculum and oversee purchases and we're looking to grow those committees and maybe EDAC can be a conduit to identify some new members. We also need insight to determine whether our existing program offerings are sufficient or if there might be other training options and programs that would be more viable. We don't want to do that in a vacuum; we want input from the Chamber of Commerce and groups like this to advise us on the needs within the Milford and the surrounding area. Item #6 of the original EDAC fostering document talked about the relationship between the school and economic development, so whatever we can do to work together and partner will be beneficial. J. Siergiewicz said he just hired a student from the machine shop program this past week.

H. Leach also gave an invitation to join her on the advisory committee for the Business, Accounting and Marketing Program which provides input on what goes on in the classrooms.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45AM